

### COOK INLET SHIPPING

The echoes of the saluting cannon had scarcely died away at Sitka, following the change of flags there on October 18, 1867, when American flag vessels began moving out from that port, bound to points along the Alaska coast on government or commercial missions. The first commercial vessel flying the American flag to clear from Sitka westbound was the brig Constantine, Captain John Hansson, on November 27, 1867. She sailed for "the Northwest Coast of Alaska and Bering Sea" with a cargo of trade goods. <sup>1/</sup> It is not known whether the Constantine entered Cook Inlet on that trip, but trading vessels were soon in evidence there.

The earliest of many American government vessels to enter Cook Inlet, so far as is known, was the Revenue Cutter Wayanda, in command of Captain J. W. White of the United States Revenue Marine, a predecessor of the Coast Guard. The Wayanda's first stop in the inlet was off what her log called English Bay, now known as Port Graham. She hove to at the bay's entrance, fired a signal gun, and an Indian came off to pilot her into Coal Cove, on the eastern side of the bay, where the Russians had once operated a coal mine. She anchored there on June 4, 1868. <sup>2/</sup>

The Wayanda next went across to what her log calls "Kenay" and "Fort Kenay" but which, from information in the log itself, was obviously at or near what is today known as Homer Spit. It can only be assumed that Captain White was under the impression that the Army post, then scheduled to be built on Cook Inlet later that summer, would be located at this place. The vessel spent a couple of days there while her officers and crew made soundings and surveys and examined the coal seams on shore. She took on

board about a ton of coal from one of the seams, then went across to Kasitsna Bay to anchor overnight.

On Sunday, June 7, the Wayanda steamed up Cook Inlet, past Anchor Point, and stopped off Ninilchik where she fired a signal gun. Nobody came off from shore, so she went on up the inlet to the mouth of what is now known as the Kenai River. On the way she overhauled the trading schooner Langley of Sitka, which had left that port on April 17 on a trading voyage. After securing a pilot, the Wayanda entered the river and anchored off Fort St. Nicholas, the Russian fur-trading post which soon became known as Kenai. A small boat from the steamer was sent some ten miles up the river on an exploration trip. Following its return the Wayanda steamed back down to English Bay to take on wood and water. Captain White and several of his officers visited the Indian village while other officers continued the sounding and survey work. After having spent a week on Cook Inlet, the Wayanda steamed out of it on June 11.

Although there were in all probability some fur trading vessels on Cook Inlet in the meantime, the next vessel about which definite information has been found was the bark Torrent, which was there on July 16, 1868, and perhaps a day earlier. The Torrent was an old-timer in the Pacific Coast lumber and coal trades, and in the summer of 1868 she was chartered by the Army to bring north the men and equipment of Battery F, Second U. S. Artillery, from Fort Vancouver, Washington. They were to establish a military post on Cook Inlet, but the intended location is still something of a mystery.

Following the purchase of Alaska and during discussion of sending troops to the new possession, Major General Henry W. Halleck, commanding the Army's Pacific Division, suggested several specific locations for forts, including "the Russian factory on Cook Inlet." <sup>3/</sup> "Factory" was a term often used in those years for a trading post.

The difficulty with this designation was that there were at least two Russian "factories" and perhaps three on Cook Inlet at that time. One was at Alexandrovsk, on English Bay. The other was Fort St. Nicholas on the Kenai River. There may have been a third, at Kasilof. There is some indication that Brevet Captain John J. McGilvray, commanding officer of Battery F, rejected the Kenai site after inspecting it and had the Torrent headed for English Bay.

At any rate, on July 16, 1868, the bark was in sight of English Bay when she struck a rock during a storm and became a total loss, although without loss of life. The crew and passengers, including the wives and children of some of the soldiers, had a pretty miserable time of it; they had to camp on the beach for 18 days until a steamer picked them up and took them to Kodiak. <sup>5/</sup>

The name of the steamer that carried the castaways to Kodiak has not been definitely learned, but it was probably the Alexander. She was one of several Russian-American Company steamers and was sold after the transfer to Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., predecessor of the Alaska Commercial Company. This firm purchased much of the merchandise and fur inventory, all of the fur stations, and several of the vessels of the Russian company. The Alexander came under the American flag at Sitka on April 23, 1868, <sup>6/</sup> and at once began servicing the stations her new owners had recently acquired. Although it cannot be positively stated that she was in Cook Inlet in August, when she returned to Sitka on August 28 she had aboard Captain McGilvray of Battery F, who went there to report the details of the Torrent's loss.

The officers and men of Battery F and their families spent the winter at Kodiak where the Army had established a post. Then, in the spring, they were returned to Cook Inlet aboard the Alaska Commercial Company steamer Constantine, another purchase from the Russians. It had by then been decided to locate the post at Fort St. Nicholas, or Kenai, and there the Constantine landed them on April 17, 1869. <sup>7/</sup> Soon after this the Army chartered the little fur-trading schooner Pioneer to transport materials and supplies from Kodiak to Fort Kenay, as the post was named. The Pioneer, a vessel of 33 tons gross measurement, was owned by V. Baronovich of Kasaa, in Southeastern Alaska, and captained by John Kashevaroff, but it was Frederick Sargeant of Kodiak who made the arrangements with the Army. The Pioneer had been trading along the Alaska coast since the coming of the Americans and perhaps for a time before that.

For Kenay had a visit that same summer, 1869, from Major General George H. Thomas who had succeeded General Halleck in command of the Division of the Pacific. General Thomas arrived at Fort Kenay on July 30 aboard the steamer Fidelater, chartered by the Army for his trip. The Army was also able to borrow Captain J. W. White of the Revenue Marine, who had visited the inlet with the Wayanda in June, 1868, to command the Fidaleter on this trip. General Thomas and his party remained at Fort Kenay until August 2, then made two brief stops on the lower inlet. One was at a place General Thomas, in his report, called "Chogatchio Bay," which was apparently the same place Captain White secured coal samples the previous year. The second call was at Port Graham. The Fidelater then steamed away for Kodiak. <sup>8/</sup>

In all, the Army established five posts in Alaska. In Southeastern Alaska there was one just inside the southern boundary, named Fort Tongass, with others at Wrangell and Sitka. Kodiak and Fort Kenay were the two in Western Alaska. The need of a regular transport vessel to serve them was soon apparent and the United States, which had seen service during the Civil War, was refitted, renamed Newbern, and sent around from the Atlantic. In command of Captain W. Freeman, Jr., she sailed from San Francisco on June 16, 1869, on her first Alaska voyage. She did not go north of Sitka that trip, but on her second voyage she called at both Kodiak and Fort Kenay.

The Newbern first arrived on Cook Inlet on September 28, 1869, and anchored overnight at English Bay. The next day she steamed up to Kenai, entered the river at high water and "anchored in 24 feet of water just above the wharf and moored bow and stern." It proved not to be a good anchorage. On the night of October 2 "strong tides" were blamed when she parted her mooring lines and dragged anchor, drifting "onto the Middle Ground." This "Middle Ground" seems to have been in the river itself. On October 3 the ship was entirely out of water at low tide but she was hauled into the stream when the water rose.

Then again at midnight on October 5, with a strong flood tide, the Newbern dragged her anchors and fetched up once more on the Middle Ground. She again got off at high water but "slipped anchors and steamed out of Kenay Harbor, leaving anchors for the post to recover." 2/

Fort Kenay was the most isolated of the five Army posts in Alaska and it was probably for that reason that it alone of the five was furnished with a vessel of its own. This was the schooner Margaret, a vessel of some 50 tons measurement. Just when she arrived at the fort has not been learned,

but she was there on June 1, 1870, when the Newbern made her second call. This time the Newbern did not enter the river but anchored offshore and used the Margaret as a lighter for passengers and cargo. The schooner delivered the anchor and cable left behind the previous fall, and 47 men, two women and five children for transportation back to the states.

The Newbern's next trip to Fort Kenay, in September, 1870, was her last visit to the inlet. Fort Kenay had been ordered abandoned and the transport, again anchored well offshore, loaded equipment and supplies, cows, bullocks and mules, officers and enlisted men and their wives and children. Cargo that could not be taken by the Newbern was loaded on the Margaret and sent to Sitka, where that vessel was to be stationed.

At the same time that it abandoned Fort Kenay the Army also abandoned its posts at Kodiak, Wrangell and Fort Tongass, leaving only the one at Sitka. At each of these other places there was a deputy Collector of Customs and the Army buildings were placed in his care. There was no deputy Collector or other officer of the government at Fort Kenay and there the post trader for the Alaska Commercial Company, was made caretaker. On May 25, 1877, the trader, James Wilson, made this accounting of the property:

"When first turned over to me in September 1870 there were in all thirteen Buildings, nine of which were built by the troops when stationed their (sic) and four old Russian houses which were turned over to the Comdg. officer through the old Russian Company. I cannot at present give you the exact size of these buildings, however I will endeavour to come as near it as possible.

"No. 1 Officers Quarters 38 x 30 ft. frame house, weather boarded, with shingle roof, in good condition.

"No. 2, Mens' barracks, 95 x 40 ft. log house weather boarded with shingle roof, in good condition.

"No. 3, Guard House 20 x 16 ft. log house, weather boarded, shingle roof, in good condition.

"No. 4, Commissary store house, 60 x 30 log house, the ends only being weatherboarded, with shingle roof, in good condition with the exception of the foundation having settled a little.

"No. 5, Blacksmith Shop, 20 x 16 plane (sic) log house, no weather boarding and bark roof in bad condition.

"No. 6, Laundress quarters, 16 x 16 ft., with kitchen adjoining 12 x 10, log house, weather boarded and shingle roof.

"No. 7, Bake House, 20 x 14 feet, log house, weather boarded and shing roof, in good condition. Bake oven settled considerably and out of repair.

"No. 8, Stables, 40 x 14 ft. log house, no weather boarding, with bark roof. Condition bad, roof partly gone.

"The other buildings are worthless and are unsafe to be occupied."

10/

For approximately a dozen years after the Newbern and the Margaret sailed away with the last of the troops from Fort Kenay, marine traffic on Cook Inlet consisted almost exclusively of vessels in the fur trade. These were, for the most part, schooners of under 100 tons gross measurement, along with a few sloops of up to 15 tons that were engaged mostly in sea otter hunting. Details of this trade, including its marine aspects, have been given in another chapter and will not be repeated here. But in addition to their duties as they crossed and recrossed Cook Inlet on their fur-trading business, these little vessels served as common carriers for the people who lived along the inlet's shores, carrying their mails and such goods as they might send or receive. And it was on the fur company vessels that they themselves depended for transportation when they wished to leave the inlet or to travel from one place to another on it.

What was probably the first private yacht ever to come to Alaska visited Cook Inlet in the summer of 1880. This was the Lancashire Witch, owned by Sir Thomas Hesketh, then on a cruise around the world. According to W. H. Dall, the yacht took coal from a seam near the present town of Homer and her engineers pronounced it satisfactory for steaming purposes. <sup>11/</sup> Dall, then in the employ of the Coast Survey, named an island on the south shore of Kachemak Bay for the yacht's owner.

In 1882 a new industry came to Cook Inlet and with it came a good deal of maritime activity. This was the salmon canning business, and details of the shipping connected with it have been given in the chapter on the fisheries of Cook Inlet.

In the summer of 1888 Governor Alfred P. Swineford, who was Alaska's second American governor and the first to serve a full four-year term, was able to visit many points along the Alaska coast as far north as Point Barrow, including Cook Inlet. This was possible because the Secretary of the Navy made available to him the U. S. S. Thetis for the trip, which lasted four months and five days and covered more than 10,000 statute miles. The Thetis, built as a Newfoundland sealer, had been purchased by the American government in 1884, at the same time the famed Bear was purchased, for use in the Greely Relief Expedition. Although she was later turned over to the U. S. Revenue Marine Service, in 1888 the Thetis was still under the Navy Department and in command of Lieut.-Commander William H. Emory, USN, with a crew of 98 men. She sailed from Sitka on May 27, 1888, with Governor Swineford and his interpreter, George Kostrometinoff of Sitka, on board. The following is from the account Governor Swineford wrote for the newspaper at Sitka:

"We left Kodiak on June 7 for Cook Inlet and arrived inside the entrance before dark. At 2 p.m. on Friday, June 8, we arrived off Kenai and anchored about five miles out. We went ashore in the steam launch.

"Kenai is now a station of the Alaska Commercial Company. There are two settlements, one native and one creole, with a Greek chapel or Church and a priest. The creole settlement consists of 20 to 25 substantial log houses and the native town of about as many of log, but mostly straw-thatched. A new salmon cannery has just gone into operation at the mouth of the river, and there I saw for the first time what is called the Tyee salmon, weighing all the way from 50 to 90 lbs. apiece. There is another cannery at the mouth of the Kussiloff River ten miles south of Kenai, but we did not visit it.



"There are only six permanent and about 50 transient white residents in the whole of Cook's Inlet, the transients being those employed in and about the cannery during the summer and who go south to spend the winter. The two canneries mentioned will put up about 75,000 cases this season, equal to 3,600,000 lbs. of fish. They employ about 150 Chinamen, who are brought up in the spring and taken back in the fall. I could get nothing in Kenai in the shape of furs and curios, the Indians being afraid to trade with outsiders.

"We left Kenai anchorage about 10 o'clock Saturday morning and steering southward finally ran in through Kachemak Gulph and came to anchor in Chugashik Bay. [This was the Russian name for the eastern portion of what is now known as Kachemak Bay. They anchored approximately off the present town of Homer.] There is no settlement at this point and my only object in stopping was to examine the coal seams said to exist there. After breakfast I went ashore with some of the ship's officers and had no difficulty in finding the veins.

"At 3 o'clock on Sunday afternoon we were again under way and before dark passed the entrance to Port Graham, or as now more popularly known as English Bay, upon which is situated the old Russian settlement of Andropsky. Here are extensive coal veins which were for some years wrought by the Russian American Company and from which they obtained coal for the steamers and for the use of the various settlements. Just before the purchase and transfer the seams having been followed under the waters of the bay, the water broke in and drowned the miners out, and the country changing ownership, operations were never resumed." 12/

Western Alaska got its first contract mail service in 1891. This was the first mail service west of Sitka. The North American Commercial Company, a relatively new fur-trading and merchandising firm which also had the contract to harvest fur seal pelts on the Pribilof Islands, won the contract. It called for monthly service from April through October of each year, running from Sitka to Unalaska with calls at a number of ports along the way. None of these contract ports was on Cook Inlet, perhaps for the reason that the inlet did not have a single post office at that time.

The North American Commercial Company did, however, have a trading station at Seldovia, near the southern entrance to the inlet, and the mail steamer called there on most if not all of her trips. It was the first time that anything resembling common carrier service was offered on the inlet, and it was severely limited by the size of the Elsie, the first vessel placed on the run. She was only 77 feet in length and could handle only a few passengers and small lots of cargo. The mails were relatively light, however, being limited in those years before parcel post and mass advertising to letters and newspapers. After a couple of seasons the Elsie was replaced by the Crescent City, 145 feet in length and with greatly increased accommodations.

In June 1892 Cook Inlet had another visit from a United States vessel of war. This was the cruiser Mohican, which was then assigned to the Bering Sea Patrol. She steamed into the inlet on June 6 and arrested the steamer Jennie and the schooners Kodiak and Lettie for illegal sea otter hunting. They were ordered to Sitka for trial. The Jennie was a steam tug from the Kenai cannery; the Lettie and Jennie combined fur trading with otter hunting. All three were manned by white crews but carried Alaska Natives for hunting, and at Sitka later that year the U. S. District Court acquitted them on the evidence that they were used only as transports for the hunters and their baidarkas.

In 1893 the Revenue Cutter Richard Rush entered Cook Inlet on June 9 and boarded the schooner Olga of Kodiak, on a trading voyage, and the schooner Mary Anderson of San Francisco, hunting sea otter with Native hunters. In the light of the previous year's court action, there was no seizure of the Mary Anderson. At Bluff Point the Rush found the schooner Valiant loading coal for the cannery at Karluk, Kodiak Island. The cutter visited the village of Alexandrofski on English Bay and the station of the Alaska Coal Company on or near what is now known as Homer Spit. She reported no other shipping.

In 1894 the low bidder on a new four-year mail contract for Western Alaska was the Alaska Commercial Company which took over the run on July 1 of that year with the steamer Dora. This company had several fur-trading stations on Cook Inlet -- Cape Douglas, English Bay, Kasilof, Kenai, Iliamna Tyonek and Knik -- and was opening a new one at Seldovia. The Dora, which was to spend much of the next 25 years carrying the U. S. mails on the Westward route, probably limited her calls in Cook Inlet to English Bay and Seldovia. There was as yet no postoffice on the inlet.

The great rush of prospectors and miners to Cook Inlet, recounted in the chapter on mining, began in 1895 and continued in 1896 and brought more vessels and more people to the inlet than had ever been seen there at one time. The year 1895 also brought the first post office to Cook Inlet, although it is possible that it was an office in name only and never actually became operative. On October 26, 1895, at any rate, Freeman H. Curtis was appointed postmaster for an office named Seward, located on or near Coal Point on what is now known as Homer Spit. This was several years before the present town of Seward was established, but there was a mining camp in Southeastern Alaska that had laid claim to the name. The post office on Cook Inlet was discontinued a year later when the new postoffice of Homer was established.

Present at the formation of the Homer post office was a Mrs. Della Murray Banks who in later years wrote of her experiences on Cook Inlet. <sup>13/</sup> Mrs. Banks and her husband were part of a gold-seeking expedition which landed at the end of Homer Spit on April 1, 1896 from the steamer Excelsior, Captain Higgins. This seems to have been the first trip north for the Excelsior and she was probably the largest commercial steamer that had entered the inlet to that time. Later in the summer she made several more trips to the inlet and in 1897 she gained some measure of fame when she landed a number of Klondike miners and something like a million dollars in gold dust at San Francisco. It was the first sizeable shipment of gold from the then new mining district.

The man in charge of the expedition of which Mr. and Mrs. Banks were members was Homer Pennock and his Christian name was chosen as the name for the new post office when it was created on October 3, 1896. In the meanwhile, Mrs. Banks later reported, there was a good deal of maritime activity in the neighborhood. In May the steamers Lakme and Utopia arrived from the south, both loaded to capacity with eager gold-seekers and their belongings. The small steamer L. J. Perry was running up and down the inlet, furnishing transportation wherever it was required. She called now and then at Homer Spit. One of her owners, who was then serving as her purser, was a man named Austin E. Lathrop. Not long after this he took over as captain of the vessel and gained the nickname "Cap" which stuck with him as he branched out into land transportation, theaters, coal mining, newspapers and radio stations, and other lines of business during the next half century.

The expedition headed by Homer Pennock, known as the Alaska Gold Mining Company, sent up a small steam tug for use by its members. The vessel made trips from Homer Spit to Anchor Point, across the inlet to Snug Harbor, and up the inlet to Turnagain Arm, the scene of most of the mining activity. Mrs. Banks also mentions in her narrative the bark Theodore and the tug Walrus, both of which were owned by a firm working coal claims in the Homer area. The J. L. Perry made two regular trips a month between Turnagain Arm and Homer, connecting at the latter point with the mail steamer Dora which came from Sitka.

The post office at Homer was established October 3, 1896. This was followed by the opening of an office at Tyonek on November 17, 1896. This village on the western shore of the upper inlet had become a transfer point for passengers and cargo bound for the gold fields of Turnagain Arm, and it was this business that generated the need for a post office there. The following summer, on July 27, 1897, another post office was established at Hope, a gold mining camp on Turnagain Arm. Still other offices were opened down at Seldovia, on September 10, 1898; at Kenai, on February 20, 1899, and at Sunrise, on Turnagain Arm, on May 16, 1899. This gave the inlet a total of six active post offices before the turn of the century, all of them located on salt water and served by marine transportation. 14/

The discovery of gold in the Klondike in 1896 and the resulting rush in 1897 for a time tended to depreciate Cook Inlet and other earlier gold discoveries, but it also aroused a new interest in the whole of Alaska. Cook Inlet derived some benefit from this. The Army had pulled out of the inlet in 1870; it returned there in 1898, although not to establish any permanent posts.

This time the interest was in overland routes to the Interior. In 1897 the Army's Captain Patrick Henry Ray had suggested that reindeer might be used to open a winter mail route from Cook Inlet to the Yukon River. In July, 1898, an Army expedition under Captain E. F. Glenn, 25th Infantry, arrived on Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet to explore possible routes. Captain Glenn and some of his men reached Sunrise, on Turnagain Arm, aboard the J. L. Perry on July 17 and from there explored the valleys that run northward from the head of the inlet. Later in the summer Captain Glenn traveled down the inlet to visit Kenai, Homer and Seldovia, but his report does not contain the name of the vessel or vessels upon which he traveled. After leaving some of his men in a winter camp near the head of Knik Arm, Captain Glenn and the rest of his party sailed from Tyonek on October 27 for Vancouver Barracks, Washington. Again, the name of the ship on which they traveled is not reported.

Captain Glenn returned to Cook Inlet the following year, landing at Tyonek from an unnamed vessel on May 14. This time he had his own transport, the small river steamer Duchesnay, and his report also mentions the use of the Duxbury, another small vessel. 15/

In the fall of 1897 the Post Office Department again advertised the Westward mail route for bid, with the new contract to start on July 1, 1898. This time the specifications called for a stop each trip at Homer on Cook Inlet, where a post office had been established in October, 1896. <sup>16/</sup> There were also post offices at Tyonek and Hope by the time the bid call was issued, but no provision was made in this contract for getting mail to them.

The Pacific Steam Whaling Company, which in the fall of 1897 began the construction of a salmon cannery at Kenai, secured the mail contract and placed the steamer Excelsior on the run the following July. The Excelsior had previously made several trips to Cook Inlet with miners and prospectors and she now became a regular visitor during the summer months. She was by far the largest and most commodious vessel yet used on the mail route west of Sitka and had adequate space for both passengers and cargo. A year or so later the company purchased the old Revenue Cutter Oliver Walcott, did some remodeling on her and placed her on the mail run. Still another of the company's vessels that handled the mail run on some trips was the Newport.

Commencing in 1900 a vessel of the Revenue Cutter Service also made an annual visit at points on Cook Inlet. This service was a branch of the Treasury Department which had been given responsibility for the enforcement of salmon fishing regulations in Alaska. The cutters on these visits carried a special agent to inspect the canneries and gather statistics. The Cutter Perry was at Kasilof, Kenai and Tyonek between July 17 and 20, 1900. In 1901 the Cutter Grant handled the chore, visiting the same points in August. The Perry was back in 1902 and 1904; no inspection visit was made in 1903.

The discovery of gold on Seward Peninsula and the founding of the city of Nome, just at the end of the 19th century, focused new attention on Cook Inlet. This was because the Nome area is ice-locked during six months or more of each year and required an overland winter route to an ice-free port, where it could connect with a steamship service. Cook Inlet is one of the closest locations that could provide such a port. And a portion of a Cook Inlet-Seward Peninsula route already existed. This was an ancient trade route from the head of Iliamna Bay, around Lake Iliamna and down the Kvichak River to Bristol Bay.

Late in 1900 the Trans-Alaska Company began surveying a winter stage route that branched off the old route at Iliamna Lake and ran northwestward to St. Michael. This survey was completed in something less than a year and it was proposed to build roadhouses approximately every 30 miles along the way and to start stage service about December 1, 1901. 17/

An associated firm, the Trans-Alaska Railroad Company, at the same time conducted surveys for a rail line along approximately the same route. Construction materials for the rail line, materials and equipment for the roadhouses, horses and sleighs, were shipped to both Iliamna Bay and St. Michael, and work was commenced on the stage line.

Bids for new mail routes in Alaska, as well as for the renewal of contracts on existing routes, were to be called in the fall of 1901 and no doubt the Trans-Alaska Company counted heavily on a mail contract to boost its operating revenues. When the Post Office Department issued its call for bids on September 16, 1901, however, only one winter overland route was specified south from St. Michael, and none from Nome. The one, Route 78118, called for three



winter trips from St. Michael to Katmai via Bethel and Nushagak. <sup>18/</sup> At Katmai this route would connection with a monthly mail steamer from Juneau to Unalaska, running the year around. The advertised route was not only considerably west of the route contemplated by the Trans-Alaska Company but also called for less service -- one trip a month for three months rather than one a week for at least five months.

Whether the Trans-Alaska Company actually carried any passengers or express over its Iliamna-St. Michael route has not been established but it seems probable that it did not. In November, 1902, it was reported that the railroad project had been abandoned and that all equipment, including horses and sleighs, was being sold. There was no mention in the newspaper story of the winter stage route. <sup>19/</sup> Individuals, usually driving dog teams, did use the route to Cook Inlet, but just how extensively it was used there is now no way of knowing.

The 1901 call for bids by the Post Office Department provided for much better mail service to and on Cook Inlet than the region had previously enjoyed. The route between Southeastern Alaska and Unalaska, as reported above, was increased to year-around service and its eastern terminus was moved from Sitka to Juneau, with Sitka becoming one of the 21 regular ports of call along the route. On Cook Inlet the mail steamer on this route made stops at Seldovia and Homer. A new route, No. 78090, was added to run from April through October and furnish service in mid month. This ran from Juneau to Kodiak, with five stops on Cook Inlet -- Seldovia, Homer, Kasilof, Kenai and Tyonek. At Tyonek this route connected with a local route, No. 79091, which delivered mail to Hope and Sunrise once each month. These two gold mining camps were provided

with mail service during the winter months, November through March, by an overland route to Resurrection Bay, where the city of Seward was soon to be founded. There it connected with the monthly mail steamer on the Juneau-Unalaska run. 20/

After the failure of the Trans-Alaskan Railway Company to build on its proposed route northwestward from Iliamna Bay, the next railway proposal in the Cook Inlet area was made in January, 1904. The Alaska Short Line Railway and Navigation Company of Washington State filed an application for a route from Iliamna Bay to Anvik on the Yukon River, then to Bering Strait. 21/

The company made a general survey of the proposed route from Iliamna Bay as far as Anvik and a detailed survey of the first 20 miles from the head of Iliamna Bay. It also shipped some steel rails and other construction materials to the bay, but it is not known that any of the rails were laid. In 1908 an application was filed with the federal government for an extension of time to begin construction. The extension was apparently granted, but so far as can be learned no construction was actually started. Although Iliamna Bay continued for many years as the eastern terminus of a much-used trail to the Bristol Bay region, the route to the mining camps of the Seward Peninsula appears to have been little used.

The railroad project that was ultimately to have the most effect upon the Cook Inlet region was started in 1902, but the start was not made on the inlet itself. A route plan was filed by the Alaska Central Railway Company of Washington State. This road was to run from Resurrection Bay, on the Kenai Peninsula, to Rampart, on the Yukon River, via Turnagain and Knik Arms of Cook Inlet, the Matanuska River, Copper River and Tanana River.<sup>22/</sup> A new town, Seward, was established on Resurrection Bay as the ocean terminus of the railroad, and construction was commenced from there. By the beginning of the year 1905, 20 miles of the road was in operation and another 10 miles had been graded.<sup>23/</sup> By August of that year work had so far progressed that a crew was sent around by boat to Turnagain Arm of Cook Inlet to commence grading from there.<sup>24/</sup>

That a considerable tonnage of construction materials and supplies was also shipped to Cook Inlet for use in building the Alaska Central is indicated by these news stories in "The Seward Gateway," a newspaper established in 1904:

"September 11, 1905 -- The steamer Excelsior, Captain Jordan arrived at 2 p.m. from Seattle and will sail this evening for Seldovia with railroad cargo."

"September 27, 1905 -- The Bertha returned last night at 8:30 from her westward trip. She had 400 tons of cargo to discharge at Seldovia by the slow process of lightering, and beside her regular trip to Kodiak she visited Iliamna Bay and ran into Port Dick twice."

"October 6, 1905 -- The Santa Clara last night brought back 200 tons of freight from Seldovia because the inlet steamers Tyonic and Neptune could not guarantee its delivery to Turnagain Arm before the inlet freezes over. The railroad can take its freight over the line from the end of track and everything will be transported that way hereafter. In spite of the congestion at Seldovia, the Portland took 150 tons there for P. Welch & Co., the contractors. They will take a chance on getting it up on the steamers. If the freeze-up comes late, they will be able to do so. If not, they will take it over the snow. The cargo included some heavy machinery and a special effort will be made to rush this through. The supplies can wait."

Despite this statement that freight would thenceforth go overland to the end of track, vessels continued to carry railroad cargoes to Seldovia:

"October 11, 1905 -- The steamer Excelsior, Captain Jordan arrived at 9 a.m. with 127 tons of freight for Seward and 270 tons for Seldovia. She will leave for Seldovia this evening. Her cargo for the inlet is chiefly supplies for the Alaska Central and P. Welch & Co., the railroad contractor."

"October 12, 1905 -- The steamer Portland returned last night from Seldovia. She was gone on the trip nearly six days, the delay being caused solely by the congestion of freight at that place. The discharging had to be done entirely in small boats as the lighters were all loaded and being used as warehouses. The available portion of the beach is piled high with freight and it is hard to reach a place to leave anything. Capt. Blodgett's house is nearly filled with goods which have to be protected from the weather and he has scarcely been left a place to sleep."

"October 25, 1905 -- The steamer Bertha returned from Westward at 11:30 this morning. She reports that the freight congestion has been much relieved at Seldovia and she had little trouble in discharging there."

Moving the railroad cargo from Seldovia to the head of Turnagain Arm was a tremendous job for the small vessels available and was slowed at times by the shallow waters and numerous shoals of the arm itself. On or about October 3, 1905, "The Seward Gateway" reported, the small steamer Neptune stranded near the mouth of Alder Creek on the north side of Turnagain Arm during neaping tides and remained there for a week before the tides grew enough to float her off.

The Neptune and Tyonic were local steamboats which served as common carriers around Cook Inlet. The Tyonic remained in service there for many years and often carried the mail. The Neptune, after a year or two on the inlet, moved to Southeastern Alaska. Whether other vessels were also used to transport railroad cargo up the inlet from Seldovia has not been learned,

but at least one shoal-draft steamer was available. This was the 70-foot sternwheeler Caswell which operated during a number of summers on the Susitna and Yentna Rivers. In 1907, apparently because of lack of business for her in the Cook Inlet country, the Caswell was sold to the Copper River & Northwestern Railway Company and taken to the Copper River where that firm was building a railroad. That there was need of such a vessel on the Cook Inlet rivers, however, is pointed up by the fact that in 1908 the Alaska Commercial Company built a small sternwheeler, the Jane, especially for use on the Susitna and its tributaries.

After carrying on construction work in 1905 and 1906, the Alaska Central Railroad got into financial difficulties during the panic of 1907 and in 1908 went into receivership. Some construction work was carried on by the receiver and track was laid as far as Kern Creek, on the north side of Turnagain Arm, a short distance east of Girdwood. There was a foreclosure in 1910 and the property was sold to the Alaska Northern Railway Company which continued to operate some trains but did not resume construction. No further work was done on extending the line until after the federal government bought the road in 1914 and made it a part of the Alaska Railroad. 25/

In 1909 Alaska's Third Judicial Division, which had its headquarters at Fairbanks, was divided. The northern portion became the Fourth Judicial Division, with headquarters remaining at Fairbanks, while the southern part became the Third Judicial Division, with its headquarters at Valdez. The following year, 1910, what became known as "the floating court" was instituted in the Third Division. The judge and various court officials made an annual summer trip to the smaller communities of the district as far west as Unalaska and Bristol Bay, holding such sessions as court business required. ~~These~~

These trips were made aboard a vessel of the U. S. Revenue Cutter Service, which in 1915 became a part of the Coast Guard, but the term "floating court" was to some degree a misnomer because no sessions were held aboard ship. The court party went ashore at the various towns and villages and conducted its business in the office of the local U. S. Commissioner or in such other quarters as were available. On Cook Inlet the towns visited by the court were usually Seldovia, Kenai and Knik, but in some years the court did not visit the inlet at all.

In addition, the cutters on this annual trip usually put into Iliamna Bay in Cook Inlet and there some or all of the members of the court party disembarked and took the short-cut to Bristol Bay. This saved them some time; what may have been considered more important, it saved what could be a long, rough sea voyage. The cutter steamed around the end of the Alaska Peninsula and picked up the travelers again at Dillingham.

Fairly typical of a court visit to Cook Inlet is the one of 1914, as recorded by the ship's log of the Revenue Cutter McCulloch:

"Wednesday, July 15, 1914 -- At Valdez. Received on board Judge Fred M. Brown, W. N. Spence, W. H. Whittlesey, F. R. Brenneman, C. M. Mossman, A. Lang, J. L. Reed, Chas. S. Price and Isaak Hamburger, all of Valdez, members of the Court.

"Thursday, July 16, 1914 -- 12 noon, made fast at Seward.

"4:20 p.m., cast off.

"Friday, July 17, 1914 -- 2:42 a.m. passed East Chugach Island.

"8:10 a.m. anchored off Seldovia Point. Sent Court party ashore.

"11:35 a.m. Court having returned, got underway.

"8:40 p.m. anchored in 12 fms. with E. Foreland bearing NNW and Kenai bearing NE $\frac{1}{2}$ E.

"Saturday, July 18, 1914 -- 3:30 a.m. underway.

"11:20 a.m. anchored in Knik Anchorage, Cook Inlet, in 13 fms., Pt. Mackenzie bearing WSW and Cairn Point bearing NxE. Sent launch and otter boat to Knik with Court party.

"7:00 p.m. Court returned from Knik, Judge Brown conferred with people from Ship Creek.

"Sunday, July 19, 1914 -- 3:00 a.m. underway.

"10:00 a.m. came to anchor off Kenai. Court decided not to land on account of rough water.

"11:05 a.m. underway.

"10:45 p.m. anchored Iliamna Bay, 9 $\frac{1}{2}$  fms., White Gull I. bearing W $\frac{1}{4}$ S.

"Monday, July 20, 1914 -- Five members of Court left vessel to rejoin at Dillingham: F. R. Brenneman, C. W. Mossman, Arthur Lang, Chas. S. Price and Isaak Hamburger.

"Remained at anchor at Iliamna Bay.

"Tuesday, July 21, 1914 -- 2:45 a.m. underway. Stood around Augustine Island and Cape Douglas."

Cook Inlet mail service again saw some changes with the letting of new contracts for the period 1906 to 1910, and the changes brought better service to the area. The inlet, for the first time, was placed on a direct route from Seattle. This route, designated No. 78092, provided for service once each month from Seattle to Juneau, Sitka, Yakutat, Kayak, Orca, Ellamar, Fort Liscum, Valdez, Latouche, Seward, Seldovia, Homer and Kodiak, with service to Homer only between November 1 and April 15 of each year. The Alaska Coast Steamship Company secured this contract and used the Portland and Bertha in the service. These were combination freight and passenger vessels.

The old Westward mail route was continued, designated Route No. 78094, but the eastern terminus was moved to Valdez from Juneau. It ran as far west as Unalaska and included calls at Seldovia and Homer once a month the year around. The Alaska Steamship Company secured the contract and used first the Dora, perhaps the most famous mail boat ever to ply Alaskan waters, then the Farallon on the run.

For local service on the inlet there was a semi-monthly summer route from Seldovia to Homer, Kasilof, Kenai, Tyonek, Hope and Sunrise. This was handled by a local firm with the small steamer Tyonic. There was also a local winter route which went overland between Kenai, Kasilof, Ninilchik and Homer, connecting at the latter port with the mail steamer from Seattle. 27/



It was while she was on one of her mail trips that the steamer Farallon was wrecked in Iliamna Bay, on January 5, 1910. This was one of the relatively few major shipwrecks in Cook Inlet. Iliamna Bay was not one of the regular mail stops, but the Farallon had a passenger for there -- probably someone who planned to take the winter trail to Bristol Bay. As she entered Iliamna Bay, a tidal current set the steamer onto a reef and she remained there and became a total loss. There were 34 men aboard, crew and passengers, and all except one survived after suffering a good deal of hardship.

The salmon~~canning~~ business on Cook Inlet, which had been static for some years, in 1910 began a period of growth which considerably increased the shipping business in the area. The Northwestern Fisheries Company built a cannery at Kenai in 1910 and this was followed in 1911 by the construction of a cannery at Seldovia by the Seldovia Salmon Company and in 1912 by two more new plants. One of these was at Port Graham, built by the Fidalgo Island Packing Company; the other was also at Kenai, where Libby, McNeill & Libby built its first Alaska cannery.

At Kasilof, the site of the inlet's oldest salmon cannery, the Alaska Packers Association continued to use sailing vessels to transport the cannery supplies and cannery crew north and to carry the pack south for marketing. The sailer, a big square-rigger, came to Kasilof in the spring, unloaded, and was taken across to Snug Harbor on Chisik Island until time to load in the fall. In 1908<sup>9</sup> through 1910 the Star of France was the Packers' vessel for the Kasilof cannery. She was an iron ship, 258 feet in length and built in Ireland and she was flying the flag of Hawaii when that country was annexed to the United

States. This brought her under the American flag. In 1911 the Star of Russia succeeded the Star of France as the Packers' Cook Inlet transport vessel, and she remained in that duty until the end of the 1923 season, when the company closed the Kasilof cannery. The Star of Russia was 275 feet in length, somewhat larger than the Star of France, and she also was built in Ireland and came into American registry via the Hawaiian Islands.

The two operators at Kenai, Northwestern and Libby, followed the example of the Alaska Packers in using sailing vessels. In 1910 when it built the Kenai cannery, Northwestern used the St. Paul, a wooden full-rigged ship which came originally from Maine. She was used in other seasons at Kenai, alternating with the Charles E. Moody, another Maine-built wooden ship.

In 1912 when preparations were being made by Libby to build at Kenai, the company chartered two former sailing vessels which had been cut down to barges. They were the Louisiana and the St. David and they were loaded with materials and supplies and brought north under tow. The company also bought the wood ship Abner Coburn, a square-rigged vessel from the East Coast, and used her for several years in connection with the Kenai plant. Later on the schooner Salvator was used for the same purpose. In 1920, however, the company began utilizing a diesel-powered freighter, the Libby Maine, in its Cook Inlet business, and sail was discarded. In 1925 the steamer Otsego, also owned by the company, was placed in service to Cook Inlet. About the same time the Northwestern Fisheries Company also discarded sail in favor of steam, using either a common carrier or its own freighter, the Perry L. Smithers.

The two other new salmon canneries on Cook Inlet, located at Seldovia and Port Graham, utilized common carriers. The Alaska Coast Steamship Company had by then merged with the Alaska-Pacific Navigation Company. The latter was known as "The Admiral Line" because it operated the Admiral Sampson and other "Admiral" steamers. This line held the mail contract from Seattle to Kodiak, with calls at Seldovia and Homer, but there was not very much activity on Cook Inlet to generate cargo business for it until the coming of the two independent salmon canneries. In 1915 still another cannery was added, at Goose Bay on Knik Arm, with an added boost to common carrier service on the inlet.

Despite the increase in common carrier service which started around 1911, at least one Cook Inlet merchant found it desirable to operate his own transportation outfit. He was George W. Palmer, who opened a trading post at Knik, near the head of Knik Arm, around the turn of the century and maintained it there for more than 15 years. At least as early as 1913 and probably earlier he began freighting his own merchandise from San Francisco to Knik. In 1913 he used the schooner C. T. Hill, a vessel of 140 tons measurement. On her south-bound voyages the schooner carried furs from the trading post, sometimes gold from the mines of the Willow Creek district, and often salt salmon from around the inlet. The Hill was again in this service in 1914 but in 1915 was replaced by the Lucy, 309 tons. This vessel continued to operate for Palmer until 1918.

The shipping business to and on Cook Inlet increased enormously after the federal government in 1914 decided first to build a railroad from the coast to the Interior, then selected what was known as the Susitna route for this road. The program included the purchase of the Alaska Northern Railroad, which then had track from Seward as far as Kern Creek on Turnagain Arm, and extending it by way of the Susitna Valley to Fairbanks in the Tanana Valley. One immediate result was the establishment of a new community which was known sometimes as Ship Creek and sometimes as Knik Anchorage and finally became Anchorage.

Three established steamship lines began sending vessels to Anchorage, which had a sizeable initial building boom in addition to the actual railroad construction work. The three were the Alaska-Pacific Navigation Company, known as The Admiral Line; the Pacific Coast Steamship Company, oldest and largest shipping firm on the coast, and the Alaska Steamship Company. In addition, at least one new line was formed and operated to Cook Inlet. This was the Independent Steamship Company with the small steamer Alliance. In 1916 Alaska-Pacific Navigation Company and Pacific Coast Steamship Company merged and became the Pacific Steamship Company. The new firm retained the "Admiral" vessels in the fleet and added others and it also became known as The Admiral Line.

Marine transportation to Anchorage was a part-year operation, the open season extending from April into November. It was perhaps most lucrative for the Alaska Steamship Company, then owned by the Guggenheim interests which had a number of copper mines in Alaska. Cargo was usually plentiful for northbound ships; it was the southbound tonnage that was hard to find. Alaska Line ships, however, were assured of southbound cargo in the form of copper ore, loaded at Latouche, Ellamar or Cordova, and for them all cargo destined for Anchorage, at the northern end of their voyages, was highly profitable. The company sent the Alameda and Mariposa, combination cargo-passenger liners which had originally been built for the San Francisco-Australia run, into Cook Inlet and they were highly popular with the traveling public there. This company also used the passenger-cargo ships Alaska and Northwestern on the Anchorage run during the early years of that port, and these were augmented by the freighters Redondo, Ketchikan, Juneau and Skagway.

The Pacific Steamship Company in those years sent to Cook Inlet the passenger-cargo ships Admiral Evans, Admiral Farragut and Admiral Watson and the freighter Curacao. A good deal of the construction equipment and some of the rolling stock for the railroad came from the Canal Zone where it had been used during the building of the canal. Much of this cargo arrived at Anchorage on the British steamer Turret Crown which also towed north a laden barge, the old sailing vessel St. David. The Turret Crown made several trips to Cook Inlet in 1917. Still more Canal Zone equipment and materials arrived at Anchorage in the barge Bangor, another old sailer, which was towed north by the British tug Commodore.

The construction of the government railroad was carried on by a specially created government agency, the Alaska Engineering Commission, and this organization entered into some shipping business in connection with its job. It chartered the big transport Crook from the Army and operated it between Seattle and Anchorage during the open season, transporting both passengers and cargo. On the inlet the commission operated the tugs L. Roscoe and Anne W. and a number of large barges. For work around the upper reaches of Knik Arm and on the Susitna River, the commission owned the sternwheel vessels Matanuska and Omineca, bringing the latter up from the Skeena River of British Columbia. In addition, for river work it chartered the B. & B. No. 1 and B. & B. No. 2 from the Barrington Transportation Company.

Construction of the government railroad was curtailed severely by the World War, resulting in a decrease in shipping activity on the inlet, but both picked up again once the war was ended and continued until the road was completed in 1923. As the Seward-Anchorage section of the railroad was improved, however, it carried more and more of the passengers and cargo that might otherwise have gone by boat all the way to Anchorage. By 1925 passenger steamship service from Seattle to Anchorage had all but ceased and only an occasional freighter called there.

But while steamer traffic to Anchorage itself declined, on the lower inlet it increased. This was in good part because of growth in the canned salmon business and a winter business in salt herring in the Kachemak Bay area. The Alaska Steamship Company discontinued passenger service to the inlet entirely when it dropped the Anchorage run, although it continued to send freighters. The Pacific Steamship Continued to run the Admiral Evans and Admiral Watson, carrying both freight and passengers, to Cook Inlet on a regular schedule. Seldovia was the main port of call, but stops were also made at Port Graham, Halibut Cove, Homer and such other points as offered cargo. Pacific Steamship Company steamers continued to run to Cook Inlet until 1933 when the line became a victim of the depression and went out of business. This ended through passenger service from Seattle to the inlet, except for occasional small vessels.

Small vessel traffic on the inlet increased as steamship traffic dropped off. More salmon canneries and other fisheries plants required more boats, and during the summer months a great many tenders and fishing vessels crossed and recrossed the inlet. With the founding of Anchorage, the mail route which commenced at Seldovia was extended to the new town. For some years the small steamer Tyonic, a veteran of the area, continued to handle the mail contract. It was then taken over by Captain Tom Perry with his Salmo, a former steam cannery tender from Kenai. Mail for inlet points was carried to Seldovia by the steamers and from Seldovia was distributed by the mailboat. After the completion of the railroad from Seward to Anchorage and as the number of steamers

sailings to the inlet dwindled, however, this flow of mail was sometimes reversed: mail for lower inlet ports went by train to Anchorage and was there picked up by the mailboat for distribution.

The Salmo was destroyed by fire in the fall of 1925 and Captain Perry purchased the Princess Pat which for three years had been serving as a mailboat out of Wrangell, in Southeastern Alaska. She had room for 18 passengers and could carry 30 tons of cargo and she became one of the best known small boats to operate on the inlet. In 1927 the Alaska Territorial Legislature, which for several years had been providing a subsidy for a local cargo-passenger route out of Nome, appropriated funds for a subsidy on Cook Inlet. The Act provided for up to \$5,000 a year for the operation of a vessel "in the coast-wise trade, as a common carrier of freight and passengers, from Anchorage to Illiamna Bay, along the coast of Cook's Inlet, touching at Kenai, Kasiloff, Ninilchik, Snug Harbor, Homer, Seldovia, Halibut Cove, Illiamna and Tyonek, and make regular stated trips not less than once in each 15 days during the season when navigation is open in the aforementioned waters." <sup>28/</sup> Captain Perry got the contract with the Princess Pat.

In 1928 because of ill health, Captain Perry turned the mail and subsidy contracts over to Captain Heinie Berger of Kasilof, who filled them with his boat Discoverer. In 1930 Captain Berger bid on and received both contracts on his own. He often ran the Discoverer to Seward and picked up cargo there for Cook Inlet points and this brought him into some conflict with the Alaska Railroad which preferred to haul the freight to Anchorage for distribution. In 1933 Captain



Birger built a new and larger Discoverer for his inlet business and in 1935 he built another but somewhat smaller vessel, the Kasilof. The Kasilof handled the Cook Inlet mail contract while the Discoverer journeyed to Seward and even to Seattle for cargo and passengers for inlet ports.

In the meanwhile, the Princess Pat was sold in 1930 to Captain Fred M. O'Neill of Seldovia and during the 1930s she continued to provide passenger and freight service, on both scheduled and unscheduled runs, to points around the inlet. She called frequently at Anchorage and continued very popular with the public. The shipping business continued at about the same level all through the 1930s and until the start of World War II. With the coming of Pearl Harbor, all maritime movements on the Alaska coast became classified and the newspapers no longer reported the comings and goings of vessels, government or private. It is known that there was a great deal of shipping activity on Cook Inlet during the war years, as there was along most of the Alaska coast, but details of it are lacking.

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